

THE CANADIAN RAILROAD HISTORICAL ASSN.

# RATTLER



Volume 2 Number 1

Jan. 13th, 1964

## GENERAL MEETING

REPORTS OF THE PAST YEARS ACTIVITIES WITH THE PRESIDENTS,  
SECRETARY-TREASURERS AND THE CAR FORMANS SUMMATIONS.



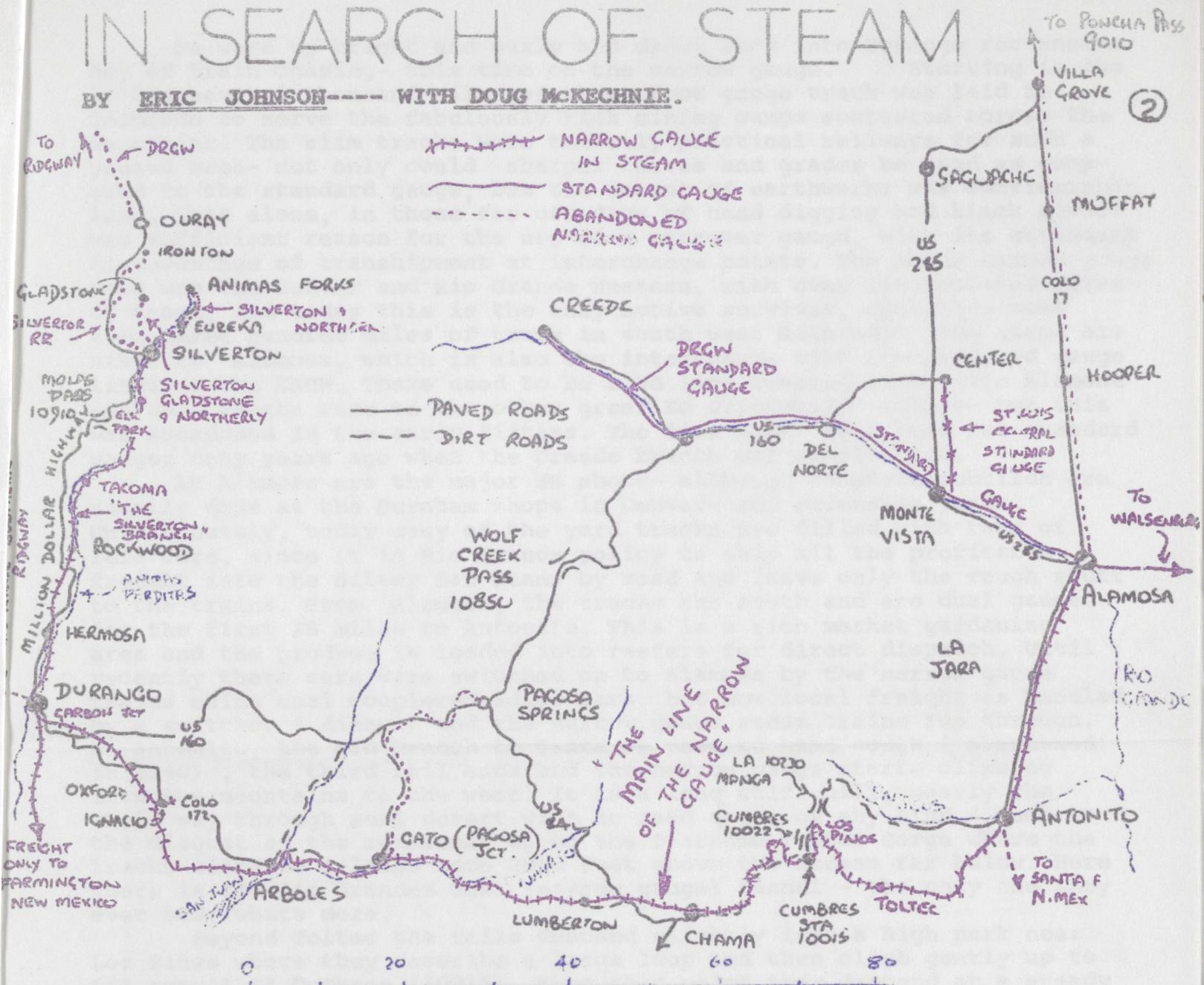
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## IN SEARCH OF STEAM....

— Part Four - End

# IN SEARCH OF STEAM

BY ERIC JOHNSON ---- WITH DOUG MCKECHNIE.



At the end of last months instalment, I gave a rather hurried description of how Doug. and I roared across southwestern Colorado via Buena Vista, Poncha Pass, Del Norte and Pagosa Springs to Durango. As I then said, we arrived in Durango just after 10 pm. and found all the hotels and motels booked solid with railfans. They had left Denver quite early that same morning ( Tuesday 3rd Sept.) and had ridden in a special diesel-hauled train through Moffat Tunnel and along the Rio Grande main line past Glenwood Springs to Grand Junction and then down the freight only branch past Montrose to the end of track at Ridgway ( 11 miles north of Ouray on the map above). At this point they were to transfer to buses to complete their long days journey to Durango. As it turned out, their mainline ride was just about on time but they then started to lose time on the branch and arrived at Ridgway about two hours late--- to find that the buses were not there-- and they then waited a couple of hours for them to arrive ! As a result they missed the spectacular mountain drive in the evening, and arrived in Durango about an hour after we did !! The hotels were thus holding all the rooms they had for their arrival, so we could not find space. So we decided to go north to Hermosa, where we stayed the night.

We were up bright and early and drove back into Durango for another day of train chasing- this time on the narrow gauge. Starting in the 1870's several thousand miles of three foot gauge track was laid in Colorado to serve the fabulously rich mining camps scattered across the mountains. The slim tracks were the only practical railways for such a rugged area- not only could sharper curves and grades be used as compared to the standard gauge, but the amount of earthworks was considerably less. This alone, in those far off days of hand digging and black powder was sufficient reason for the use of a narrower gauge, with its attendant disadvantage of transhipment at interchange points. The major narrow gauge road was the Denver and Rio Grande Western, with over one thousand miles of track, and today this is the only active survivor, operating over some three hundred miles of track in south west Colorado. The shops are sited at Alamosa, which is also the interchange with the standard gauge lines of the DRGW. There used to be a NG line running north from Alamosa and over Poncha Pass to the other great NG stronghold- Salida- but this was abandoned in the early fifties. The line over Veta Pass was standard gauged many years ago when the Creede branch was constructed.

At Alamosa are the major NG shops- although complete rebuilds are usually done at the Burnham shops in Denver- and extensive yards. Unfortunately, today many of the yard tracks are filled with rows of idle cars, since it is Rio Grande policy to ship all the profitable freight into the Silver San Juans by road and leave only the rough stuff to the trains. From Alamosa, the tracks run south and are dual gauged for the first 28 miles to Antonito. This is a rich market gardening area and the produce is loaded into reefers for direct dispatch. Until recently these cars were switched up to Alamosa by the narrow gauge trains using dual coupled idler cars, but now local freight is handled by a switcher (diesel) and the narrow gauge steam trains run through. At Antonito, the old branch to Santa Fe used to head south (abandoned in 1940), the third rail ends and the narrow gauge starts climbing into the mountains to the west. It is a long stiff hill, nearly the whole way through semi desert with no road access of any kind (much to the disgust of the railfans) up to the fearsome Toltec Gorge where the tracks cling to a ledge some 2000 feet above the stream far below. Here there is the Rio Grandes ONLY (narrow gauge) tunnel - the only one they ever had, what's more.

Beyond Toltec the rails descend slightly into a high park near Los Pinos where they describe a large loop and then climb gently up to the summit at Cumbres (10015). From this point they descend at a steady 4% for 14 miles to the divisional point at Chama, which is just inside New Mexico. West of Chama, the line runs through rolling country and along river valleys to Durango, the next divisional point. From this yard, a freight only branch runs some 50 miles south to Farmington, New Mexico- a farming centre and hub of a booming oilfield, while another branch runs north for just about the same distance to the ghost town of Silverton. By all the rules, this branch should have expired years ago, since it has not generated a ton of freight in years. Not only that-- it sports a daily-- in the summertime-- passenger service, the only such regularly scheduled passenger train on narrow gauge in the United States. This train, the "Silverton" is in fact the most profitable passenger train in the USA, beating its nearest rival-- the "California Zephyr"-- by a comfortable margin.

This train, of course, depends almost entirely on tourists for its livelihood, as do the city of Durango and the town of Silverton, which would become a true ghost town overnight but for the thousand or more dollars that each train brings into town (to say nothing of the taxes the Rio Grande pays). Traffic is booming-- this year the Rio Grande has actually built two new passenger cars (the first new ones acquired by the narrow gauge since the eighties !!) and they have started to run the train in two sections.

Well, while all that descriptive talk has been going on, we have arrived at the depot (enlarged this year) to find two trains standing at the platform. The one beside the station was composed of four open platform cars, a baggage car rebuilt to serve refreshments, three more passenger cars with vestibules (modern stock!) and two open gondolas -the leading one has a sun canopy but the rear one is completely open. The second train was shorter, just four passenger cars and an open observation gondola. This was to be the regular train, running 45 minutes late, while the longer train was to be used by the fans, and was to run first, on schedule. Both trains were filling but most of the fans were over at the roundhouse looking at the engines. Two of the remaining three Class K28 2-8-2's were to be used- 473 on the regular train and 478 on the first section (the other engine, 476, was over at Alamosa undergoing major repairs) ..

After several thousand pictures had been taken and 478 had moved out of the shed and on to its train, the fans climbed aboard-- and after some whistle soloes-- pulled out for Silverton. We followed the train on the parallel highway, stopping at several points to watch her chuff past. Once clear of the town, the tracks run through an almost flat valley for seven or eight miles with steep red cliffs to the east and a mountain range to the west. We ran ahead of the train to Hermosa station, where there is a wooden through truss bridge, a water tank and siding and set up our cameras and recorder for best effect. Eventually 478 rolled into sight under a black canopy (the crew is used to fantrips and lays down smoke at the slightest provocation) and clattered by, bending down the weeds as it passed. We hurried ahead again to the last rail--road crossing crossing at Shalona Lake, just south of Rockwood. Beyond Hermosa the tracks climb steeply- the ruling grade for the entire branch is here-on to a ledge on the west side of the valley, leaving the road below. After a couple of miles the road makes a hairpin climb over the ridge on which the tracks are now running and then leaves the river valley completely to cross the mountains to Silverton. This grade crossing is another excellent viewpoint as the train is climbing quite steeply across open ground along a tangent- also the road gives easy access. There were about ten cars in attendance but we all managed to get good viewpoints, without being in one anothers way. Again 478 gave a good display of smoke (and an excellent whistle signal) and we all scurried back to our cars to attempt to race the train into Rockwood. This "town" consists of a few scattered summer cabins beside a wye and passing siding which is usually filled with a row of work cars and is about a mile off the main road. It is the last point that can easily be reached from the road until the outskirts of Silverton. It happened that ours was the first car away from Shalona Lake-- and I didnt loiter-- but the train has only to go about half the road distance and beat us to Rockwood. However there was to be a photo run and this gave us time to get to track side while the train backed out of sight and then came thundering by. I regret to say that it was just as it started its run that I discovered that I was out of film.....

Beyond the Rockwood wye the track runs through a deep rock cut for a couple of hundred yards and then turns abruptly on to a narrow ledge some 900 feet above the foaming waters of the Rio Los Animas Perditas (or River of Lost Souls, in memory of some drowned Spanish explorers of the 1700's). This is a very dramatic point, and the ledge continues for nearly a mile before the river bed rises steeply and the railway crosses it on a Howe truss, to follow the east bank for some ten miles or so.

This ledge gives some excellent shots, so we walked in behind the special and laid in wait for the regular train, Doug and I choosing different bends for our pictures. Eventually it arrived and crept cautiously around the curves with flanges screaming. Much to my surprise,

there was a track gang working on the ledge, installing rail anchors-- the narrow gauge is really looking up when the Rio Grande does maintenance !!

After doing a little sightseeing, we lugged all our equipment back to the car and drove over the Million Dollar Highway ( so called since it is graded with poor quality gold ore ) which climbs twice above the ten thousand feet mark, and has good views of the mountain peaks but nothing to compare with that seen from the train. The tracks cling to the waters edge- literally- for winding mile after winding mile-- the water is crystal and you can see the rocky bed and even occasional fish, if the foam is not too thick. The mountains drop down sheer into the water and ruined mine buildings cling to the rocky faces at many points. Eventually the valley widens just before Silverton is reached. At this point, the road is high above on a ledge, and, if you can find a place to park, this gives a dramatic view of the "toy" train winding slowly along a thousand or more feet below. Having watched the train leave the canyon, we went ahead into Silverton and made our way at once to the Grand Imperial for lunch so as to get ahead of the crowd.

On returning to the car, we found it was raining so we decided to leave the yard ( not that there is much to see) and drive on north to explore the old Silverton Northern. In days gone by, Silverton was the southern terminus for no less than three NG lines, all serving mines scattered along the three river valleys forming the headwaters of the Animas, and all heading for the riches of Ouray and the Camp Bird mine. The Silverton Northern was the most easterly of these and follows the main tributary. On the outskirts of town, we passed a working mine with a long cableway heading eastward high on to the opposite mountain face, where the ore is mined. The buildings at roadside were actually a crusher - the ore is hauled by road to a smelter at Ouray. In 1960, there was talk that this mine would ship a million tons of ore a year down to the smelter at Durango- by rail of course- and the fans held their collective breath, since this would have been a sight to see. However, it all fell through, as many a good plan has because of the depressed state of the industry.. Beyond this point, all lies derelict and abandoned. Five or six miles further on we came to the site of Eureka, where was situate the Sunnyside Mill, Colorados largest, torn down in the 40's for war scrap. Eureka once had several thousand people living there, now hardly a building stands-- this is mostly because the valley is very narrow and the river, at runoff, sweeps all before it, including the road.

At the Sunnyside mill the grade steepens to 4% and climbs on to a ledge on the west side of the V-shaped canyon which rises just about as rapidly as does the railway ( since we are now driving over the old grade) to Astor where the grade increased to a fantastic 7% up to the settlement of Animas Forks at 11200 feet. This section of the line was regularly swept by avalanches and the Forks would be cut off for weeks at a time. Luckily the townsite was relatively secure and many of the old buildings still stand- in particular a three storied bow windowed hotel with a grisly taste in dark wallpaper- the same in every room. Here there was a mine and a mill and a switchback which led some half mile further on up to the old Frisco mine which was at the end of track. We went up to this mine and explored it- or rather Doug did-- I was chicken !! Doug found his film wasn't winding forward in the camera, which cast some gloom on the proceedings ( you know, as a pair of enthusiastic photographic railfans, we sure did everything wrong that we possibly could ! ) The weather was still gloomy, though it had stopped raining so we were glad to turn down hill toward civilisation.

We had a quick look around Silverton and took pictures of some of its old buildings, and then made our way as fast as possible back over Molas Pass through heavy rain, and arrived at Rockwood about 15 seconds AFTER the special train rumbled through !! Which wasn't bad timing-- we consoled ourselves that it was raining so fast we couldn't have taken a

picture anyway ! We retraced our steps once again to the main road and down to Shalona Lake crossing, but once again the train beat us, but we in turn beat it easily to Hermosa, where it stopped raining. However it was blowing hard which didnt help the sound recording department one little bit. We followed the train into town and watched it, and the ordinary train behind, cross the Animas river bridge in the northern outskirts. This is a very unusual bridge- it has three spans all different. The first is a through wooden truss, next comes a "modern" (circa 1910) steel through truss, followed finally by a plate girder deck span. Now theres a bridge to model !! By this time it was virtually dark so we retired to the Red Barn for a much needed supper and so to bed, as we had our earliest start of all in the morning.

Now it was Thursday, Sept 5th. and our last day for steam in action. At 7am a special was to leave, with the fans aboard, for Alamosa where their standard gauge cars awaited for an overnight run to Denver and an early start on to Chicago ( with S632 hauling them across Nebraska.) So, as I said above, we were up betimes- and it was a dull grey morn- and were down to the station some minutes ahead of train time ( passing enroute a straggle of fans with their luggage heading in the same direction) The train engine was a K36 Mikado, No.484 ( one of a class of ten engines) somewhat larger than the K28 used the previous day. The train pulled out just about on time with the same consist as before plus one box car jammed tight with baggage ( the DRGW has no pure baggage cars left so have to use a box car instead ) and we followed on the main highway which crosses the line twice in quick sucession. The railway has quite a hard climb out of the river valley and it winds endlessly around the hillside to do this- once on the plateau, it heads south east across an Indian Reservation toward Ignacio. We waited for the train at each grade crossing ( at one, we saw a section car acting as a school bus :) and then ran ahead to Arboles. Here a large dam downstream has backed up the San Juan River to form a large lake. As a result the railway and road have been relocated a and the line crosses the Piedra River on a spectacular curved deck girder bridge. We decided that this would make a good point for a picture, so waited patiently for the train to arrive. When it did, we found to our surprise that the fans thought so too, as they had arranged a photorun. So we got a chance of two shots. Beyond this point, the road and rail run absolutely side by side on brand new grade round what will be the edge of the lake, when it fills up. This provided more excellent opportunities for close up pictures, until we pulled ahead to run to Gato, whcih used to be the junction for the Pagosa Springs branch. Here the train stopped for water in a very sylvan setting with giant cottonwoods almost covering the tracks.

We were now faced with a problem. There is no road to the east following the tracks, just a dirt road heading north to Pagosa and then around to rejoin the railway near Chama. This skirts a large mesa, and, in 1960 we did manage to find our way across this on a very rough track. However there had been a thunderstorm the night before so we decided not to risk getting stuck and went the long way round, following the grade of the old branch for most of the way. We were lucky, and got back to the tracks before the train arrived-- in fact we almost got into Lumberton when it met us more or less head on on a curve. So we about turned and chased it back into Chama, where it stopped for coal and water, and to pick up a helper (another K36, No487 ). We stopped for lunch, but got away before the train did. The dirt road up to the summit is narrow and rough and there were ten cars chasing the train- however it ran fairly slowly on the 4% grade- and we all kept up easily. This is a thrilling climb up what appears to be quite a gentle valley, since it is wide and quite thickly wooded. The track winds along the north face following the contours and is crossed three times by the road in the 14 miles. The last

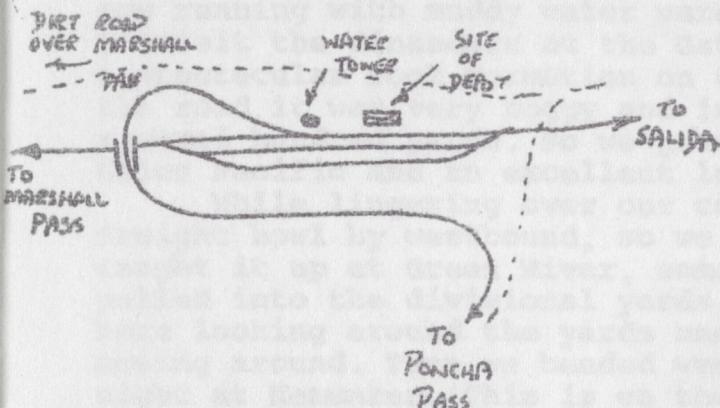
part of the climb is made by means of a large loop in a side valley. The main valley ends quite abruptly below a massive craggy cliff known as Windy Point, and the dirt road surmounts this by several hair pins on the south side of the valley. The Rio Grande crosses the road just above the site of Coxco station and then winds north, east and then south, climbing continuously, and finally edges around a narrow shelf high on Windy Point to reach Cumbres summit at 10015 ft. Here there are two passing tracks and a wye covered by a snowshed--necessary in view of the 300 inch snowfall often found in a winter. There is a gaunt depot almost at the exact summit which is usually occupied in the summer months by a section crew-- with luck one of the gang will speak English, the remainder speaking Spanish only, since this is the local language in this area along the New Mexico-Colorado border.

We watched the train storm across the road at Coxco in drizzling rain and stayed there to watch it climb around the big loop. Much to our pleasure, a photo run was made on the approach to Windy Point, and the rain moved away as the train slowly finished its long climb. We then roared up to Cumbres, which we reached just ahead of the train and watched the engines take water. The helper, 487, then cut off the train and ran ahead down the hill eastbound for Alamosa-- the train slowly followed until the helper was well ahead and then picked up speed itself. Just east of Cumbres siding, the tracks make a "muleshoe" loop to lose height and then run parallel to the siding but somewhat lower down the hillside. An 80 car freight will fill this loop so it is not very large. The tracks then run along a fairly steep hillside, with the road above, for about two miles to Los Pinos, where they make another graceful loop near an old water tower and then continue down the valley to Osier and Toltec Gorge and so down on to the plains of the valley of the Rio Grande (del Norte) at Antonito. The road leaves the railway at Los Pinos and heads over La Manga Pass at 10230 ft. and then down into the valley of the Conejos to Antonito.

Since we could not follow the train all the way down the hill, as on the west side, we watched it leave Cumbres and then took pictures of the buildings, before heading east ourselves, catching a last glimpse of the train far across the valley near Osier. We then followed the rough road over the hills and down into Antonito and then north across the fertile flat lands into Alamosa, where we stopped briefly at the Iron Horse Motel for mail and at Safeways for food. Then it was on north along a monotonous tangent which used to parallel the Valley Line (abandoned about 1953). This line, surrounded by 14000 foot mountains, was notable for containing America's second longest tangent-- over 50 miles of it. However, all trace of the narrow gauge has not gone, since the old grade can be seen at intervals and many of the farms have sheds made from old narrow gauge box cars (one piggery a little west of the main road has about 15 cars arranged in long rows and is the most impressive display of car bodys off the tracks I have ever seen !)

As we headed north the Sangre de Cristo range to our right gradually converged on the road and the valley slowly petered out and became a mountain pass with the old grade winding to and fro to maintain an even climb. The railway leaves the road close to the summit of Poncha Pass at 9010 ft. to wind up side valleys on either side of the crest, but on the north side of the pass is high above the road on another ledge. Suddenly the road swings east and the railway west at Mears Jct. where we join the old main line over Marshall Pass from Salida via Gunnison to Salt Lake City. This is very romantic country, since this was the first route to cross the Rockies, and narrow gauge passenger trains with sleepers, diners and all the comforts of the standard gauge maintained service across the state for many years,

a through connection being available until the late twenties. Even then the Shavano continued to run and was not withdrawn until 1939. Unhappily the economising axe of Pearlman fell heavily on the narrow gauge in the early fifties and this grand old line was abandoned, leaving the city of Gunnison slowly to decay.



Having looked briefly at this old grade we ran down the valley to Poncha Springs, where until 1956 the Monarch branch still ran in narrow gauge steam (now its diesel, but boasts of 4% grades and a switchback, not to mention heavy daily service.) Here we joined the main line of the Rio Grande and the Arkansas River which we were to follow for 200 miles, first north and then west. By now it was almost dark but we continued north through Buena Vista to Leadville, Americas highest city, where we stayed the night at the Vendome, which DID NOT come up to the promise of its outside.

We were up early on Friday, Sept. 6th. and were taking pictures of old buildings by 7 am. We also explored some of the gulches to the east where the major mines were situated (including the famous "Matchless" of Haw Tabor fame) and looked at the two railroad yards. Leadville is served by a branch of the Rio Grande and an isolated segment of the Colorado and Southern. This was narrow gauge until 1942 and was the last remnant of the Denver, South Park and Pacific, whose main line we had seen earlier at Como. Until early this year, the 12 miles of track from Leadville to Climax were operated by 2-8-0 No. 634 but now this ~~has~~ gone diesel and 634 is on display beside the old depot. There is still a maze of tracks around the town but the area is in decline so far as mining is concerned.

We soon headed north again and threaded the spectacular Eagle Canyon, with the road on a ledge high above the rail and river, and so to Minturn which was a helper station and a thriving town in steam days but now is just a wide spot in the road (and not very wide, either). The canyon is narrow and windy for many miles with an occasional garage or village to mark the miles. Just east of Glenwood Springs, there is a very spectacular canyon with bright red rock cliffs soaring high above the road, rail and river, all crowded together. Naturally, no trains were to be seen in the more colourful areas.

Some 30 miles west of the Springs, at Rifle, we left the main highway (No. 6/24) and headed north to the cattle town of Meeker, with the intention of cutting a corner across a "blank" area on most road maps to Rock Springs, Wyoming. This would save us quite a few miles of driving but had the snag of being all on dirt roads, which perhaps didn't exist at all (since every map we had differed as to their layout!) However, our route lay across desert and around the end of the Dinasour National Monument, and we had always wanted to see a live dinasour, so we decided to chance it....

Well, it was our luck to pick the first day in several years, or

This is a rather unusual junction-to gain height, the Poncha Pass to Alamosa line runs west parallel to the main line at first and then climbs around a steep curve over the main line and then back east on a shelf on the hillside and then finally turns south in the approach to Poncha Pass. The old water tank still stands but the foundations only of the station are still to be seen. The old grade over Marshall Pass is now a dirt road and is very scenic.

so it seemed, that it RAINED. Believe me, there is nothing quite so dreary as a wet desert. Actually it was quite interesting as we were well off the beaten path and the scenery was very different from Colorados mountains. The rolling arid countryside with scrub bush, a few cows and the very occasional house and many normally dry gulches now running with muddy water were an unusual sight. We had intended to visit the dinasours at the Gates of Lodore entrance (the 'gates' are a spectacular rock formation on the Green River) but when we tried the road it was very boggy and indeed at one point was flooded for several hundred yards. So we gave up and headed for Rock Springs, the Union Pacific and an excellent lunch in an hotel right by the tracks.

While lingering over our coffee, we heard a gas turbine-hauled freight howl by westbound, so we took off after it, but only just caught it up at Green River, some 25 miles to the west as it slowly pulled into the divisional yards. I suppose we spent about an hour here looking around the yards and watching several gas turbine engines moving around. Then we headed west again about fourty miles to stay the night at Kemmerer. This is on the UP line heading northwest to Oregon and I am sure there were trains roaring through during the night, but we didnt hear them.

We did see one the next morning though, as we were on our way bright and early. This was the Portland Rose heading east. We now headed north sometimes in Idaho and sometimes in Wyoming as the road crossed and recrossed the border. This took us through some pretty and fertile, but railroadless, country past Afton and Jackson to Hebgen, where we detoured to Earthquake Lake to see the site of the 1960 earthquake--very interesting and aweinspiring.

We kept west of Jellystone and eventually joined the main east-west highway No.10 west of Three Forks, Montana at the village of Sappington. Here we crossed the lines of the Northern Pacific and the (electrified) Milwaukee, but no trains visible. However we were a little premature as we had only gone a mile or two when we saw an eastbound Milwaukee freight hauled by two Little Joe electrics. We raced back but were not in time to catch it. So we about turned and we went to Lewis and Clark State Caverns, where there is a most remarkable railway. To be accurate there are TWO railways, which serve to carry visitors to the caves from the car park which is itself reached by a very steep and winding road. The first line is flat, about 4" 5" gauge and the engine is a JEEP (not a GP, but a WILLYS JEEP) modified to run on rails. It pushes a trailer to the cave and pulls it back and can carry about 30 passengers. No switches, no loops, just an almost straight track! From the far end of this line a balanced cable railway runs up the almost sheer cliff to the cave mouth. The "balance" is a weight and not a second car as is usual.

Once again it was evening so we headed north, now definitely in the direction of Edmonton, through Helena, Wolf Creek and Augusta to Choteau where we stayed for our last night. Finally on Sunday, Sept. 8th. we made our last days run via Browning (where we crossed the Great Northern main line, but nothing in sight), Cardston, Fort McLeod and Calgary, and so back to Edmonton. And the whole way we didnt see one moving train ...!

To cap the day, I spent a very pleasant couple of hours with our good friend Peter Cox, of Vancouver, who was on his way east, and had broken his journey for a short visit with us.

We do hope you have enjoyed this story of our trip and that it will inspire you to do likewise. The only moral that I would venture to draw is that there is a LOT of interest on the railroads and many things to see, old and new. Particularly as regards the OLD, I think we should all make every effort to record buildings, track layouts and rolling stock while they are still with us.

TOMORROW WILL BE TOO LATE.....

The regular monthly meeting of the CRHA, Rocky Mtn Branch, will be held in the Cromdale Car Barns on Tues. January 13th 1964 at 8:00pm. The meeting is most important as it is our yearly General Meeting.

#### ANNUAL MEETING

Elsewhere in this issue you will find the formal reports of the President, Secretary - treasurer and of progress on the restoration of ETS No 1. We have several important topics to discuss amongst which are:

- a) 1964 programme
- b) Should we have a membership drive? If we do, how many new members should we aim for? It should be remembered that our present meeting place will hold in comfort about 20 people as a maximum. If we hope to go much above this figure of regular attenders, this means we may have to find a new home.
- c) Election of new officers. If you wish to nominate a member for office, make sure before the meeting that he is willing to serve.

We have several members whose attendance is irregular, in fact their sole contact with the CRHA is their receipt of the Rattler. The present executive are worried about this as we feel that the programme we have organized is at fault. We would therefore appeal to every member to attend this January Meeting in order that we can discuss these matters, and so enable the new executive to plan accordingly.

If, for any reason, you cannot attend this meeting, will you please let us know beforehand. If you have any suggestions to make, please let us know in writing or by word of mouth, so that views can be represented.

It is most discouraging to the executive and speaker to plan a programme and then have an attendance of as little as four members!

Cont'd on the next page ...

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PRESIDENTS REPORT.

It can fairly be said that the 1963 activities of the Rocky Mountain Branch of the CRHA have been extensive and that much has been accomplished. On the other hand, we could have done better in some respects, and "much remains to conquer still".

Regular Monthly Meetings.

Eleven of these were held- eight at our regular meeting place at Cromdale carbarns and three in the form of visits to local railroad facilities. We had our first talks devoted to railroad history with reviews of the Edmonton and Calgary Transit Systems, by JOHN MEIKLE, while BILL SHARP took us back to the days of steam on the CPR, and showed how the company used its different engines on a given day in 1952. The other meetings were devoted to slide shows by WAYNE BROW, DOUG. McKECHNIE and JOHN GUAY, covering railroads and steam traction engines in western North America.

On our visits, we saw the CNR diesel shops at Calder and the now dismantled North Edmonton tower. Finally the master mechanic of the NAR, Mr. C.COMRIE, gave a most informative lecture on Air Brakes in the NAR instruction car at the Dunvegan yards.

Excursions.

Only one excursion was run this year, but it produced easily our biggest crowd to date. No less than 65 people rode an NAR mixed to Barrhead in May. I would like to note particularly the wonderful cooperation we received from the NAR in arranging this, in Particular from the Chief Dispatcher, Mr.W.J.DONLEVY, who very kindly made the trip possible by annuling the Barrhead Mixed on the Friday, its normal day, so that we could ride it on the Saturday.

Library.

Work is slowly proceeding on the sorting and indexing of the considerable amount of material we have already received. However, no collection is ever complete and we would be most grateful to receive any items for preservation. In particular we need old photos, or the loan of old pictures, which we will copy and return as well as modern pictures of old buildings and rolling stock. This is a vital activity which we can all work at. The older buildings and cars are being scrapped at an alarming rate and NOW is the time to record them- next month WILL be too late. So, as you travel around please carry a camera-- if you see an old station or section house, an elevator or industrial building which is unusual, please take its picture and pass the word on to other members of what you have seen.

Restoration of ETS No.1.

This work has proceeded during the year- details are given separately in our Car Foremans report.

The "RATTLER."

This year has seen the introduction of our own local magazine. This started as a one page sheet giving notice of the next meeting which soon blossomed into a very finely produced journal, with maps, drawings and illustrations. The high quality of the production is entirely due to the efforts of our Editor, WAYNE BROW, who merits our heartiest congratulations for his work.

Presidents Report, continued.....

Our meetings are regularly attended by a group of members who are constant in their support. However, there are several who are rarely seen at Cromdale and this causes me some concern as to the reasons for their absence. It would seem that our programmes could be improved, since they are attracting only some 50% of our membership. This is a point which I would like to draw to the attention of the 1964 executive, together with the problem of an increase in membership.

It is with personal regret that I resign from the Presidency of our branch. It has been a most enjoyable year for me, but I am convinced that a change of leadership at regular intervals is a very good thing in an organisation such as ours, since this brings new ideas and methods forward, and prevents us getting in a rut.

Eric Johnson.

CAR FOREMANS REPORT.

It is interesting to note that our first work night, on Dec. 18th. 1962, was almost exactly one year before the last one in 1963, held on Dec. 16th. We had a total of 415 man hours worked on a total of 38 work nights. This is an average of 10.9 man hours per work night, counting the total effort of CRHA members and others.

We have dismantled all that is necessary, and should be in a true restoration programme in 1964. The roof has been completely covered with plywood and new arch supports installed. The flooring is all new and has been painted. The trucks have been removed, steam cleaned and scraped and painted. The motor armatures have been cleaned, tested, commutators undercut and the windings varnished, and new bearings are being obtained. The compressor has been dismantled and overhauled- it too will receive new bearings. New windows have been made and are ready to install. Seats, brass fittings and other items were obtained from ETS car 15, now at Picardville, and are almost ready to install. Masonite for the interior lining, canvas, white lead and linseed oil (for the roof) are to hand and ready to install. The K6 controller on 5 track has been promised for installation in the car.

We have a target date of July 1, 1964, to complete the car so that it may be shown in the Exhibition Parade. This should prompt us all to great efforts. To use our work time more efficiently, all day sessions on Saturdays are going to be tried, at which times large jobs can be completed in one "go". This should speed progress considerably as much of our time on Monday evenings is spent in getting work ready and then in packing up again. Monday worknights will continue as required to prepare the major jobs, so that work can go smoothly on Saturdays.

The first session will be on Saturday, January 18th. at 9 am.. Bring your lunch, tools and anything else you require. Cars may be parked inside. Information on other work dates will be printed in the "Rattler".

John Guay.

On the 18th. the work on No. 1 will be largely carpentry, so bring the appropriate tools!!

Reports Cont'd . . .

Secretary-Treasurers Statement for the period ending Dec. 1963

Receipts;		Expenditures	
Collections	\$6.00	CRIA on Membership	32.50
Subscription for Rattler	15.00	Stationary	.19
Fan Trip May 18	14.90	Postage	<u>1.20</u>
Membership for CRIA	2.50		3.89
	38.40		
		Balance -	334.51
			<u>38.40</u>

Vince Coley

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Missabe Road engines . . . .

The CN has leased 15 engines from the Duluth Missabe and Iron Range Rly for grain hauling. Assigned to Winnipeg, they will be used on the Prairie and Mountain Regions. Here are the numbers:

132, 134, 139, 142, 145, 159 to 163 and 164 to 168 incl.

Keep an eye open for them at Calder so that you can get a photo.

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Well, we tried.....

Our cover this month was done by the Xerox process as an experiment. We were present at a demonstration of this machine and seized the opportunity to try it out. A colored cover will return next month.

So you lucky readers, this month you get an added bonus - a cover that you may color yourselves!! You may color the business car NAR orange, the letters in a deep olive and how about the title box in red Ocher?

About that snowplow - its rather symbolic isn't it? Stranded in a snowdrift while the engine runs for water.. Color me gone.

Credits for this and last months newsletters: Eric Johnson, Vince Coley, John Guay, Omer Lavallee via Harold Maw and the CN News.

